

Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-05

IGA-01 MC-02 ACDA-05 IO-10 SAM-01 /093 W

----- 066259

O R 051950Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1780

AMEMBASSY SANA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T JIDDA 4832

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, YE, SA, US

SUBJECT: YEMEN PRESIDENT HAMD'I'S INTENTION ACCEPT SOVIET
MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: A. JIDDA 4328; B. SANA 1755

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SUMMARY: RECOMMEND THAT URGENT ATTEMPT BE MADE TO DISSUADE PRESIDENT

HAMDI FROM ANNOUNCING TRIP TO USSR AND FROM PROCEEDING WITH REEQUIPMENT OF YEMENI ARMY UNDER SOVIET AUSPICES. SUCH ACTION WOULD HARM OUR SECURITY INTERESTS IN ARABIAN PENINSULA AND COULD SERIOUSLY SET BACK SAUDI - YEMENI RELATIONS (ECONOMIC, MILITARY, POLITICAL). IF HAMDI WOULD COOPERATE, WE WOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO SOON TO OBTAIN GREATER SAUDI ASSISTANCE FOR YEMEN'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION. END SUMMARY

1. SANA'S 1755 IS BAD NEWS. I BELIEVE THE USG WOULD BE JUSTIFIED IN URGING PRESIDENT YAMDI TO UNMAKE SUCH DECISIONS BECAUSE OF THE HARMFUL EFFECT THEY WOULD HAVE ON OUR SECURITY INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE PENINSULA, AND ON SAUDI-YEMENI RELATIONS.

2 IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUCH AN APPROACH, WE MIGHT ASSURE THE YEMENIS THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS THEIR CASE WITH THE SAG. AT PRINCE SULTAN'S LAST MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS, HE SAID THAT THE SAG WOULD TAKE UP THE QUESTION OF AID TO YEMEN AS SOON AS THE BUDGET WAS OUT (AROUND JULY 10) AND THAT WE COULD EXPECT QUICK ACTION THEN (REF A).

4. WE CANNOT BE SANGUINE HOWEVER THAT THE SAG'S POLICY OF POSTPONEMENTS AND DELAYS TOWARDS THE YAR'S MILITARY BUILDUP WILL SURELY SOON CHANGE. THE SAG WANTS YEMEN, AS A NEIGHBOR, STRONG ENOUGH TO BE SAFE FROM THE PDRY, BUT NOT SO STRONG THAT ITS SIX OR SEVEN MILLION INDUSTRIOUS PEOPLE SHOULD BECOME AN ALTERNATIVE POWER CENTER IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. PREDICTABLY THEREFORE, THE SAG'S CONCERN WITH YEMEN'S MILITARY PREPAREDNESS WAS AT ITS PEAK WHEN YEMEN WAS UNDER THE GREATEST PRESSURE FROM THE PDRY. BUT SINCE 1972-1973, THE URGENCY OF THE PDRY THREAT TO YEMEN IN SAUDI EYES HAS SEEMED TO DIMINISH AND I THINK FOR THESE REASONS PRINCE SULTAN'S INTEREST IN OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS HAS DIMINISHED ALSO. RECENTLY MOREOVER, THE SAG AND PRINCE FAHD HAVE SHOWN MORE INITIATIVE THAN THE GOVERNMENT OF KING FAISAL DID IN MAKING DIPLOMATIC APPROACHES TO SOME OF SAUDI ARABIA'S LONGSTANDING FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS, INCLUDING RELATIONS WITH THE PDRY.

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3. UNTIL NOW THEREFORE, THE SAG HAS PROBABLY BEEN CONTENT, AS FAR AS BOTH PRINCE FAHD AND PRINCE SULTAN ARE CONCERNED, TO LET THE

QUESTION OF THE YARG'S MILITARY DEVELOPMENT DRIFT ALONG, WITH JUST AN OCCASIONAL PULL ON THE OARS. IF PRESIDENT HAMDI, HOWEVER, GOES THROUGH WITH THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, THE SAUDIS WILL BE ANGRY AND UPSET. THEY WILL NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BLAME, BUT WILL CONCLUDE THAT HAMDI HAS FINALLY SHOWN

HIMSELF IN HIS TRUE COLORS; ASSISTANCE IN MILITARY DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE SET BACK, SAUDI MEDDLING IN YEMEN'S CENTRAL GOVERNMENT/PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS WOULD AGAIN INCREASE, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR YEMENI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHICH DEPEND LARGELY ON SAUDI SUPPORT, MIGHT SUFFER TOO.

4. WE HAVE CONSIDERED BY THINK IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THE SAG WOULD BE QUICKLY BROUGHT AROND TO A MORE COOPERATIVE POLICY IF PRESIDENT HAMDİ ANNOUNCES HIS INTENTION TO VISIT MOSCOW. IF THE ARMS DEAL MENTIONED IN REF B SHOULD THAN BE CONCLUDED THE SAUDI REACTIONS WOULD BE EVEN MORE SEVERE.

5. IF PRESIDENT HAMDİ'S DECISIONS ARE NOT IRREVOCABLE, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL ALSO FOR THE YEMENIS URGENTLY TO EXPLAIN TO THE SAG WHY YEMEN MUST BEGIN NOW TO IMPLEMENT THE RETRAINING, MODERNIZATION AND RE-EQUIPMENT OF ITS ARMED FORCES. WE CAN HELP TO SUPPORT A YEMENI PRESENTATION, BUT THIS MESSAGE MIGHT BEST BE PASSED TO THE SAUDIS FROM THE YEMENIS THEMSELVES. SULTAN HAS ALWAYS KEPT US AT ARM'S LENGTH WHEN WE HAVE URGED CERTAIN POLICIES TOWARD YEMEN ON HIM. HE IS DISPOSED TO VIEW YEMENI AFFAIRS AS A QUASI-INTERNAL SAUDI MATTER, ONE IN WHICH THE SAG IS MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED AND AS WELL INFORMED AS WE. AN APPROACH BY US TO CROWN PRINCE FAHD OR SULTAN NOW, MOREOVER, ON BEHALF OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN WOULD BE INAUSPICIOUSLY TIMED, SINCE FAHD AND SULTAN HAVE RECENTLY ESPRESSED DISSATISFACTION AT U.S.-SAUDI ARMS RELATIONSHIPS, AND ARE AWAITING REPLIES TO A LIST OF URGENT REQUESTS THEY HAVE AMBASSADOR AKINS BEFORE THE AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE ON HOME LEAVE.

6. ACTION RECOMMENDED: THAT WE TRY TO GET HAMDİ TO DEFER ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS TRIP TO THE USSR AND THAT WE CONTINUE
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TO SUPPORT YEMENI EFFORTS TO OBTAIN GREATER SAUDI ASSISTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THE YEMEN'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION.
HORAN

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